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Town Hall -

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CLASS OF 1910





AN ADDRESS
DELIVERED BY
REV. FREDERICK NEWMAN KNAPP,
AT THE
RE-OPENING
OF THE
TOWN HALL AT WALPOLE, N. H.
FEBRUARY 10, 1887,
WITH THE
OTHER EXERCISES OF THAT OCCASION.



RE-OPENING

OF THE

TOWN HALL AT WALPOLE, N. H.

FEBRUARY 10, 1887.

In 1786 the Town of Walpole voted to build a new New Meeting House, which was located on Meeting House Hill and completed in 1789. In 1826 the building was removed to its present site in the village in Walpole. It was used both as a Church and Town Hall from 1789 to 1842, and since for town purposes only. Appropriations of \$9,500.00 were made in 1886 by the Town for repairs, alterations and furnishings, and the Hall was re-opened for public uses, February 10, 1887. The work of its renovation was conducted under the direction of

ALFRED W. BURT,
ALBERT F. NIMS,
HARRISON G. BARNES, } Building Committee.

WILLIAM PITT WENTWORTH, Architect.

MESSRS. SMITH & ALLEN, Builders.

JOHN W. PRENTISS,
HERBERT J. WATKINS,
CHARLES W. TOLE, } Selectmen.

KEENE, N. H.
SENTINEL PRINTING COMPANY, STEAM PRINTERS.
1887.

Ms 1190 3.20

v



Lawrence S. Dodge

ORDER OF EXERCISES, FEB. 10, 1887.

MUSIC, WALPOLE CORNET BAND.
PRAYER, REV. WILLIAM H. TEEL.
ADDRESS BY CHAIRMAN, HON. JOSIAH G. BELLows.
MUSIC, WALPOLE CHORAL UNION.
PRESENTATION OF BUILDING TO THE TOWN BY THE BUILDING
COMMITTEE, AND RESPONSE BY THE SELECTMEN.
POEM, WRITTEN FOR THE OCCASION BY REV. THOMAS HILL,
D. D., READ BY MR. CURTIS R. CROWELL.
MUSIC, WALPOLE CHORAL UNION.
DEDICATORY ADDRESS, REV. FREDERICK N. KNAPP.
MUSIC, WALPOLE CHORAL UNION.
“AMERICA,” AUDIENCE.

COMMITTEE OF ARRANGEMENTS:

JOSIAH G. BELLows.	HORACE A. PERRY.	BOLIVAR LOVELL.
WILLIAM ARNOLD.	ASAHEL H. KINGSBURY.	WILLIS C. FOSTER.
ALBERT F. NIMS.	JOHN W. PRENTISS.	HENRY BURT.
WILLIAM W. GUILD.		

DEDICATORY ADDRESS

BY

REV. FREDERICK NEWMAN KNAPP.

[**NOTE.**—As this address was written without any thought of its publication, but merely for the ear of old friends and acquaintances, there is in it a freedom of speech and a tone of easy familiarity which might not seem altogether fitting for a published address. But I have felt that it was best to give it to the printer just as it was given to the people.—**FREDERICK N. KNAPP.**]

FRIENDS AND FELLOW TOWNSMEN,—(for wherever, for the time, my home may be, I hold on to my right whenever I return to Walpole to use that word of “Fellow Townsmen”);—let me, first of all, tell you how glad I am to be here to-night, and how glad I am that you wanted me to come. New town halls are good, but the old town itself is better, and old town friendships are best of all. I thank you for turning to me with the thought that I could share in your feelings of pride and satisfaction in the completion and adornment of this house which you have built, and which we are now to dedicate.

One word of preface. When persons know beforehand just how much they have got to endure, they bear it better than if kept in suspense. So I will tell you in advance, that while I assured your committee I would have this address but just forty-five minutes long, I find, to my regret, that it will detain you some fifty-five minutes; so, that extra ten minutes of time, you must give me for old acquaintance sake.

I am now ready to take up my theme; and to begin with, let those here present, young and old, join in these services, not as in a mere holiday recreation, but in much earnestness; and let us all, as our first step, invoke the spirit, and recall the memory of the men and women who have gone; our fathers and mothers, and their fathers and mothers also; those who a hundred years

ago, and for a long time afterwards, sat beneath the very rafters which support the roof that is over our heads to-day,— noble men and women, whose spirit and whose memory might both hallow and grace any public occasion. For as I look over the history of this town and read of its pioneer settlers, their enterprise, their liberal policy, their humanity, their early provision for public schools and for public worship, their literary note, their contribution of fighting force and of thinking force, as in field and in council, during the entire war of the revolution — beginning with their hurried rally to march to Lexington on the very night that they heard the first signal gun ; and when, out of a population of less than five hundred, thirty armed men and three officers started for the battle field,*— as I read of all this, I bow before those pioneers and their descendants with admiration and with reverence.

And the more I realize what they were, as told me by records, by tradition, by my own recollection of those living within a half century, the more ready am I to challenge any settlement upon the bank of this beautiful river, or of any river that flows from the mountain to the sea, or upon any plain, prairie, or shore, to show, within the same limits of population and of time, — say their first one hundred years — a set of nobler, stronger, cleaner, more patriotic, more intelligent men and women than those who met in that same old “ Hill Meeting House,” that house whose staunch timbers are again enlisted for another century’s campaign, to battle against wind, and storm, and tempest. May it prove that this re-enlistment of veterans is “ for life,” and may their term of life be a thousand years !

Those men and women who met in that church, were gathered not from the village only, but they came from off the hills, and from out the distant farm houses, those places concerning which the response was so wisely given, when, in contempt of the stony soil, some city fop, in flippant tone, asked, “ What on earth do you raise here ? ” The answer from the stern old farmer was, “ We raise what evidently your father never attempted to raise, we raise men ! ”

Think of those who gathered in that same church ; after their long drive in winter, through drifting snows, sitting for an hour and a half, at very least, in an immense building that had no

* For military service, see Aldrich’s History of Walpole, page 45. Population in 1767 was 308; in 1778 it was 658.

fire ; listening often to a sermon with sixteen " Divisions," followed by the " Improvement," so named. There must have been a strong fire within of faith, or devotion, or sense of duty, or something of the sort, to have kept those men and women from freezing to death, there and then !

Such were those who once worshipped under this roof. Is it not well that now and then, as occasion like the present gives us leave, without really turning from our theme, to read the records, and see again the living forms of noble men and women, now gathered to their fathers.

You know, of course, what was first used here as a town hall. It was the fort, built by old Col. Bellows, when he started the settlement of the town. And the first town meeting at which any public business was transacted, beyond choosing town officers, laid an assessment for building highways, and levied on each settler seven shillings to pay for preaching. It was in 1760 that the town voted to give to Rev. Mr. Leavitt a call to become their minister. This was only seven years after the charter of the town was granted, and when there were but fifteen families in the whole town.

Six years afterwards a town meeting was held for the first time, in the meeting house, which had just been built on the crown of the northern hill, close by " Uncle Si's " dwelling, now owned by his grandson, our valued citizen, John W. Hayward.

In passing, let me note one fact, by way of fixing the location of that first meeting house, for the benefit of persons who are curious in such matters. According to Mr. Aldrich's town history, for which we are all so much indebted to him, the pulpit stood directly over the spot where is now a well of purest water in daily use. We cannot but picture to ourselves the preacher as he stood there of old, calling upon that little band of worshippers to come near and draw waters from the wells of salvation, not knowing of that other spring beneath his very feet, from which coming generations were to draw, constantly, water sweet and unfailing.

Does not the building of that first house of worship, used also as the town house for years, by that mere handful of people, tell as no written record could, of the importance which they attached to religious services? And I doubt not that your celebration to-night is a copy, in some measure, of what occurred 120 years

ago, when that same building was dedicated. For, though used before it was entirely finished, doubtless it was solemnly "dedicated." That house was not built by contract; those who built it put hand, as well as heart into it; for the following vote was passed at one of the town meetings: "Voted, to build a meeting house fifty feet in length, by forty-two feet in breadth, and that each settler work four days, or pay twelve shillings, toward putting up the frame." At that dedication, prototype of this, I will warrant you, though even that small building could not have been half filled if the entire population of the town had gathered there, there were hearts as grateful as any that to-night take part in the dedication of this house, of such ample dimensions.

But I linger too long in the past. Let us now ask to what uses do we dedicate this building? First, we dedicate it to the service of the town, as the place for "Town Meetings." And when I say that, I speak a word which has a broader meaning than the ear at first catches. And it is well for our younger people especially, to consider it. Look at it.

The "Caucus" and the "Town Meeting,"—these are peculiar features in a Republican system of government, in distinction from a monarchical government, in distinction from all other systems of government in the world. More than that, the caucus and the town meeting are among the chief agencies in maintaining a republic like ours; keeping it alive, year after year, and century after century, and keeping its life pure. It is the place where that fundamental idea of a republic is both illustrated and developed, the idea, namely, of the right of each individual to speak freely his own mind, and without fear or favor cast his vote.

The caucus and the town meeting are great educational agencies of the people. Here, all sorts of topics are brought up for action; political, national, local; appropriations to be made for roads, for schools, for bridges, for public buildings, for fire engines, for the proper care of the burial places of the dead, for the merciful care of the town's poor, for damages claimed on account of injuries caused by wash-outs, or neglected highways, for choice of town officers; these, and twice as many more subjects, are brought up at town meetings.

Now, all this implies and includes what? Debates, discussions, interchange of thought, comparison of views, the studying of different plans of action, examination of motives and of prin-

ples ; investigation of doubtful questions, calling upon the lawyer (if he happens to be a judge, all the better) for a statement of what the law requires, or else allows, to be done in a given case.

And it likewise leads to, and so includes, the freest kind of fault finding, and some warm language ; all which has got to be taken by the opponent thus assailed in a manly way, for there is really no malignity in it, excited as the man seems when he is talking ; and it is a neighbor, too, who made the attack, and got a trifle too warm, a neighbor who, as every one knows, would, any day or night, go miles in a driving snow storm for a doctor, if need be, to come to that very man whom, the day before, he was berating so in town meeting !

Haven't you known just such cases? I have! And do you realize what an educating influence all this exerts upon all concerned in it?

Then, too, the free discussion of these various town topics calls men to their feet, as they get warmed up, and leads them to utter their honest opinions or earnest protest in a free, off hand way ; — men who, if told in advance that they had got to go to town meeting and make a speech, would rather break a balky colt, or handle a yoke of three-year-old steers. And yet, those very men, thus entrapped into speaking by their own wholesome interest and earnestness, find out, for the first time, how much they've got in them of what is worth the saying, and worth the listening to, as well ; and they find out, to their surprise, how well they can put it ; and how readily the right words come to them, when they are once fairly started, and are full of what they are to utter. And they discover, and others listening note it also, that it isn't alone some Judge Bellows, or Doctor Richardson, or Parson Knapp, who happens to have been through college, that knows how both to think and to talk in public ; but that there are fifty others in the town who have just as clear and judicious ideas, and full as forcible a way of putting them. Sometimes there may be a little false grammar mixed in with these town meeting speeches ; but no matter for that, if all this calls men out for free talk and strong thinking. Good grammar is a good thing, but a live man with an honest opinion of his own, and his own way of telling it, is a better thing ; grammar won't save a republic, live men can.

So strongly do I myself feel the value of these town meetings, as educating influences, that in my own town I never miss attend-

ing them. And what is more, I sometimes close my school for the day, and take my fifteen boys, whom I have under training, to be made into men, and so adjourn my private school to the larger school room, the town hall. And I always feel disappointed if the articles on the town warrant are rapidly disposed of, with but little discussion, and little sharp shooting. I feel as if I, and my boys, and the people at large, the young men especially, were all of us cheated out of our rights.

I generally aim, whatever may be the topic, if it really has two sides to it, to take a hand in the debate, so as to keep the ball moving, and not to allow it to get at rest too soon.

As the forenoon glides on at one of our town meetings without any wide awake discussion, or any prospect of it, I really am led to sympathize strongly with the feelings of the man at "Donnybrook Fair," who, according to the story which you have all heard a hundred times, arriving late, and looking round, exclaimed, "What! eleven o'clock! and no fighting yet! will some gentleman please tread on my coat tail?"

And now that I am at the confessional, let me go a little farther, and say, that I enjoy having "adjourned town meetings." I like to hear some one in the crowd call out, "I move that we adjourn till a fortnight from to-day, at nine o'clock in the morning!" and, "I second that motion!" says another, and the vote is almost unanimous. Of course, a few who are troubled with physical and moral chronic dyspepsia, vote against it; they want to finish up, and not be obliged to turn out again; but the healthy ones, with minds that enjoy activity, all vote "yes."

Now see how this works. During that intervening fortnight, three-fourths of the men who were at the town meeting when certain topics were brought up and debated, but not settled, talk over those same topics, with one another. You catch a man, just then, leaning over his neighbor's fence, with his scythe or hoe at rest, or hailing some one who is passing in the road, or staying two hours over at neighbor Blank's, so that his wife (who can't yet go to town meetings and vote, but who will, by and by) has to wait dinner for him, and you may be pretty sure that that man has been discussing those questions which are to come up two weeks hence, at the adjourned meeting.

And thus by talking, and thinking, he gets clearer views and new ideas; perhaps he actually sees the subject discussed in an

entirely different light ; and to the surprise of certain fossils he changes his opinion and his vote, faces squarely about. And all this is of his own free will ; no one bribed him to it ; no one drove him to it. He did it because he was man enough to do what he had finally concluded was right, I have known such cases ; perhaps you have !

Is there not some weight, then, let me ask you, my friends, viewing it in this light, in my assertion that the caucus and the town meeting are great educational agencies of the people?

Their importance is not half realized, especially in our hill towns and inland villages, whose great mission seems to be to furnish men of muscle, and men of brain, and men of principle, to impart new life into our cities, and make up for the waste of vital tissue there.

And, as bearing upon this very point, let me here urge upon you, as voters, this one thing. In making provision for your public schools, demand that they be conducted upon the basis of common sense education ; where pupils are taught to think, and to gain information upon what is going on in the world to-day ; and where they learn something of the dangers and of the duties of life ; where they acquire an interest in true reform and humanity. All this can be secured in our public schools, if rightly managed, and if sustained by public sentiment. Too much time is given to dry "book-learning ;" too little time given to what will interest and wake up the mind and heart. And in the advanced schools, too much time is given to "dead languages," too little time given to live issues and real things. Consider these points, all of you, men and women alike ; they are worth your thought.

Therefore, when I say we dedicate this building to the service of the town, as a place for "Town Meetings," with all their varied purposes, it is no light word that is uttered. It calls upon you all, on your part; for wise, broad, independent action, as voters in a town which is part of a great republic.

Now, secondly, we dedicate it to that service which a Lecture Hall renders to a community. You have here a place where the public lecturer will be glad to meet such an audience as you can so well give him ; where your citizens, especially your young men and young women will be induced to turn from mere trashy yellow covered literature, which so saps the vital forces of the mind and heart, and take in the rich and nutritious thoughts and facts of

history, biography, art, literature, science, morals, philosophy, temperance, woman's rights, the Indian's wrongs, subjects all which the studious lecturer has, by careful labor, condensed for his hearers. The public lecturer to-day holds a place among the educators of the community which he never held before; and he exerts a potent power. In providing an attractive and suitable place, light, warm, cheerful, to induce and welcome the coming of both audience and lecturer, you have done well.

And if, with the above named, we include, as we fitly may, musical entertainments, with their refining and elevating influence, both instrumental and vocal, there is a still richer significance in the provision you have made. To each varied service then, of Lecture and of Concert, secondly, we dedicate this hall.

But, thirdly, we dedicate it to the service of such "Organizations" as from time to time may apply for its use. I do not happen now to know what organizations exist here; but I doubt not your doors will be open to all whose aim is "Friendship, Love and Truth," or who, through associated action and helpfulness, seek to improve their members, and so to benefit the community.

There are, however, two organizations of whose existence here I happen to know, which I may mention as likely to avail themselves of the use of this hall. One is your "Agricultural Society," which I regard as a most valuable agent in stimulating the local pride and enterprise of our farmers; leading, as it does, to the introduction of new and better methods of tillage, improved breeds of stock, and enlargement of the varieties of industries; leading also, and perhaps best of all, to reading, and thinking, and talking upon all these subjects; leading, likewise, to the investigation of nature's methods and adaptations in the growth of produce. And consider the worth of it all, independent of the money value, to a town like this, where, as the farmer before quoted, said, we are engaged, as one branch of domestic industry, in raising men. For surely it all conduces to "that broader intelligence out of which spring enterprise, inventions, and the recreating industries." This is what the social science of to-day calls for.

How admirably adapted is this building for the uses of just such a society, at one of its annual exhibitions. One hall for a display of the fruits of the dairy, the garden and the field; the other, with its culinary facilities attached, for the display of the

skill of the wives and daughters, whose willing hands are in waiting at the well spread tables, to dispense the bountiful feast.

And there is one other organization here which I can name, and whose application for the use of this hall I am sure would never fail to be granted, whose presence would itself, in my regard, be a solemn dedication. Need I tell you to what I refer? "The Grand Army of the Republic." In its annual meetings, on "Decoration Day," when a whole town should join with the local "Post" in their sacred services of tribute to the memory of their departed comrades, how fitting this place for their assembly, with its own associations of noble souls, long gone!

I seem now to see that band entering, thus by their presence to aid us in these services! Men of many battles; bearing with them marks and memories of privations, sufferings, forced marches, suspense, wounds of which we read and talk, but whose real significance can never be told in words; I see them entering these doors — that ever diminishing band of veterans, never to be recruited. And by their simple presence, no word spoken, is the dedication of this hall, to the ends of good citizenship and patriotism made more significant and real.

And in this connection let us not forget to name those gatherings which may be held in this hall on days of national celebration; when glad hearts assemble to recall, with gratitude, events or men of great import; the birthday of the nation itself, or the birthdays of individuals, like Washington, Grant and Lincoln, who, under God's guidance, saved the nation; the day, too, when that "Proclamation of Emancipation" was signed, by the strongest, truest hand that ever held a pen!

For, note it, the ~~celebration~~ of such days forms part of the education of a free people; to be provided for, it need be, at the public expense. It is a branch of the public school. To neglect the proper observance of such days is to cheat the rising generation out of their choicest opportunities for being taught nobleness by high incentive.

A republic cannot afford to be careless, in town or village, of its observance of such memorial days. Neglect harbor defences (as we are now doing to our disgrace in the eyes of the nations), paralyze our foreign commerce, if you will; cripple domestic industries; but fail not to give to each generation, as it comes upon the stage, an idea of the costliness and the worth of a

republic, and the nobleness of truth, of honor, and of patriotism, by presenting these glowing portraits of real men.

Thus, I say, thirdly, to the service of Beneficent Organizations, and to the commemoration of great deeds and great men is this building dedicated.

But there is yet one more end to which this work of your hands is to render service.

So, fourthly, we dedicate it to the promotion of "Good Fellowship." Next to churches and school-houses, what Christian communities need, are facilities and inducements to secure good fellowship; places and occasions where the people at large can get together, shake hands, look in each other's faces, enquire about the folks at home, find out how the sick are getting along, tell of and rejoice in one another's good prospects, find out what the children are doing, especially those who have gone away from home, (for those most distant are usually nearest to parents' thoughts), and so on, through the whole list of what neighbors and townsmen naturally strike upon, before the evening is out, when they meet socially together. Think how this refreshes the heart, and widens the reach of social interests, and converts "people" into neighbors, and neighbors into friends.

This great end is partly effected by churches and societies—this promotion of fellowship—and so far it is good; but churches generally are clannish, just as certain "classes," as they call themselves, in society, are clannish.

But here is a place where in these social gatherings, such as I see by the programme we are to have to-night, (and from which I am now detaining you), without regard to church creed, or to party in politics, to where one lives, or how he lives—great house, or cottage—if only his life is respectable, all come together for a good time, based on good fellowship. I attach the largest value to just this service, which your building, with its well arranged facilities, is intended to render in this direction. The influence is far-reaching; it is full of good. Rational enjoyments, under proper restraints, and shared with those whom we esteem, are to be reckoned among the most valued safeguards of society. To Good Fellowship, then, we dedicate this town hall.

And now, without referring to other special uses to which this hall is assigned, let me offer to you still further the more comprehensive view of the subject; for I am now speaking, as I

believe, to men and to women who, on this occasion, look for something that is earnest, and worth thinking about. And we have it on good authority, that a word of exhortation has become by usage a part of the ceremonial on these occasions.

So I ask this question : After all these exercises of dedication are finished, what is this town hall, so conspicuous a feature as it is of the village, to stand for, what idea does it represent?

I answer. In itself, as a mere structure of wood and brick, architecturally designed, it stands for nothing ; left to itself it would soon yield to decay. As a mere convenience for assembling to transact business, or secure a merry-making, it amounts to but little.

Only as it is made to serve real purposes, connected with enduring principles, which cannot decay, is there meaning or worth in it. Thus only does it stand for something,—namely, when its dome covers an idea. A big dome ! do you say, to cover as little a thing as an idea !

Nay, not so ! An idea, embracing true thought concerning human life, duty, citizenship, law, that of God and of man, this is not a little thing ! No dome on earth, though it be as of St. Paul's, or St. Peter's, and over-arching a vast cathedral's aisles, is big enough to cover it !

Shut in it may be at first, and for a time, in an individual soul, as the fabled Genie confined in the magic lamp of the Arabian Nights, but once let out, getting itself into the world's thought and conscience, it becomes a giant in its power.

Of no enduring worth is this building, I repeat it, unless directly or indirectly it helps you, as a community, to carry on, and carry out, the purpose for which, in God's design, communities were established ; for which men were led by their native instincts, as well as by life's necessities, to build up villages, and to congregate in cities ; to get good and growth out of human life ; to lift up, step by step, with each added generation, humanity itself in its tone of thought, its aims, its appetites, lift it up onto a higher level ; to make men stronger in their determinations ; more flat-footed in their stand for the right ; more trumpet-toned in their "yea" and "nay;" clearer in their recognition of duty, its beauty and its power ; clearer in their recognition of the pitiable weakness, the idiotic folly, the bankruptcy of any course of dealing

with fellow men, or with God, excepting by a course of honesty,—honesty to the uttermost!

But stop! I think I hear some one whisper, “ He has forgotten what he is here for, — namely, to help us dedicate this hall. We did not ask him to come a hundred and fifty miles that he might preach to us a sermon; we have local ministers here to preach to us !”

Nay, my friend, not as from the pulpit but as from a stand in the midst of daily life, do I speak to you, as a man among men, and of those things which most concern business men, and, too, of what is most intimately connected with the dedication of this very hall. The pulpit has had assigned to it, or else has assumed, too great monopoly of this kind of appeal. Since I have been, of late years, less in that same place, the pulpit, and more where men “ most do congregate,” I have found this out. Our public places of assembly, our town houses, school houses, libraries, reform societies, lecture rooms, and the like, are coming to the front with their claim to be counted in as authorized and honored agents for helping on a Christian civilization, and a higher elevation of the people at large. Not as rivals, mark it, of the pulpit, nor as substitutes thereof, but as duly appointed and divinely ordained co-workers with the pulpit, to this practical end of right living.

This is just what the world is finding out more and more, and making a corresponding demand upon all our social institutions, namely, — that in purity and in purpose they shall be agencies for the promotion of truth and righteousness.

All honor to the faithful minister of the Gospel, the High Priest, serving as of old in the temple; — “ When he went up to the holy altar he made the garment of holiness honorable; ” — with reverence and with gratitude receive him; but remember that there are, under God’s ordinance, other priests in this great temple of the world, namely, — all faithful men and women, simple and genuine in manner, pure in heart and true in life; and, more broadly told, all of these wholesome institutions, and social agencies, planted in our towns and cities.

Let the churches receive your cordial support of heart and of hand. Never did the world more need their Christian ministries, and their loud call to repentance and reform, but give liberal support, also, to all these other agencies for good, and demand that they all assert and justify their claim to a high mission.

Let me make a digression. While thinking of ministers one can hardly help wondering what old Parson Fessenden, settled here just 110 years ago, and Rev. Pliny Dickinson, his successor, would say, if they were to look in here to-night, and see the transformation of this building (in which together they preached for nearly three quarters of a century), and were to listen to some of the views now advanced; and be told, too, that the dedicating service was to be closed with a grand ball and lively music!

Parson Fessenden, the little man in black, arrayed in his full wig, with short-clothes neatly buckled, or else "straight-laced" at the knee; he the man of inexhaustable wit and wisdom; Rev. Pliny Dickinson, the scholar and theologian, in more modern garb, but himself tied up in a somewhat strait-laced theology,—we cannot help wondering what they would say.

I am a little puzzled, I confess, to know just how they would take it; but from what I have been informed of the characteristics of those two worthies, I am inclined to think that Mr. Dickinson, after a little wise, evangelical hesitation, would say, frankly and generously, "I am glad, my friends, that the world is moving, even if, in its progress, it has left me, and my theology, a little in the rear." And as to Parson Fessenden, I think that in his open hearted, old fashioned, cordial manner, and with that keen, merry twinkle of the eye, for which he was noted, he would say, "Friends, all! I rejoice in these exercises, and in this day; and if you'll excuse my short-clothes, I'll lead out a partner, and join in the dance!"

I am not sure, you know, that he would say this; but I think he would.

You are aware, I suppose, how those people are designated who pay liberal subscriptions to the parish, to support preaching; but very seldom come inside the walls of the church, having more money than religious zeal,—for there are such men in almost every community. Instead of being designated "pillars" of the church, they are called "flying buttresses," that is, supporting the church from the outside. This is the architectural definition of them.

In your relation, not to your church only, whatever it may be, but to all public institutions and agencies for good, for which this town house is to be henceforth a rallying point, stand not as flying buttresses, outside supporters, but be verily pillars, in personal

presence and hearty interest. Demand, for instance, of yourselves and of others that the policy adopted year by year in your town meetings, when in this place assembled, be humane and wise ; providing liberally for education, and for public improvements. Consider that the best possible investment of a town's money, even financially reckoned, is in what adorns and beautifies the town itself and elevates the tone of the people. Demand of your community that by word and act they endorse and encourage all that is right, discourage and boldly root out all that makes for evil.

How many churches are there in town, and how full are they, and how full of a Christian spirit are the people who gather there? A stranger coming into town naturally asks these questions. But there is another set of questions he will also ask if he is up to the thought of the times, and abreast with the demands of the present day. He will ask how many rum-holes are there here in this town, and how full are they? And the people who gather there, how full are they,—of that other spirit that undermines families and communities, and feeds the fires of hell?

These are some of the questions which a stranger will ask after seeing your shaded streets, and hospitable looking homes, and admiring this noble building with its evidences of taste and liberality on the part of the town. And for the answer to these questions you who build public halls, and also build public sentiment, are responsible, believe me.

One sentence more and I close. As those Hebrews of old, in their desire to signify that in all things they were trying to serve God, wrote even upon the bridles of their horses, "Holiness unto the Lord;" so might you, if the highest possible service of this very building could be recognized, write on its door posts, with no compromise to religion or to the sacredness of Holy Writ, the words "Glory to God in the Highest, Peace on Earth, Good will to men."

PRAYER

BY

REV. WILLIAM H. TEEL.

God of our fathers, our Father God, Father of Lights, Giver of all good, willing to enrich with Thy best gifts.

We bless Thee for this glad occasion to which Thy Providence has brought us. We thank Thee for this building of venerable and interesting memories, enlarged, rejuvenated, beautified and thus restored to us. We thank Thee for this beautiful town, of which it is the civic centre, its breezy hills, fertile meads, and sunny vales, its health, prosperity and intelligence. We thank Thee for the salutary laws and just Government under which we live, the Republic, State, town, wheel within the wheel, well regulated and harmonious in movement, the widening intelligence, the enlarging power of Religion, which together secure the stability of the freedom they have bestowed.

We pray Thee that Thou wilt bless to us this interesting occasion. Bless the Chairman of the evening, and may the honors he receives from men be crowned with the more lasting honors from above. Bless the Committee whose wise judgment and fidelity have secured the excellence of this hall. Bless those who so skillfully and faithfully have carried out their plans. Bless the Selectmen who receive again the care of the hall. Bless the honored friend of the town whose dedicatory poem we shall hear. Bless the Orator of the evening, and his words to us; and may all the sons of the town, who have sought other fields of usefulness, often return to gladden us with their presence. Bless the band. Bless the Choral Union, and the youth they represent. May life for them be full of the best of songs. Bless the aged citizens of the town. Their voices are growing weak for earth; may faith

spring up and grow strong in them, and hope brighten with the light of the other world, and desire grow strong for the assembly that ne'er breaks up. Bless everything this evening that tends to elevated thoughts and taste, every pleasure that is legitimate, pure, temperate.

We would not forget that these old rafters once resounded to the dedication of this house to the Lord. May the memory of that early dedication never be far from the thoughts of those who meet here. May the oaken beams which the architect has left in sight, be a continual reminder that they who would build permanently must build well, that character needs to be ribbed with principle strengthened with might by God's Spirit. May the happy union of the old and the new be a lesson in the wisdom of combining conservatism with the spirit of progress. May the rejuvenating of the old structure be a suggestion of the larger need we all have for the regenerating change, and the rejuvenating touch. And to whom for this may we go but to the "Son of the Carpenter."

And so we would re-dedicate this hall to those virtues and uses which subserve the highest welfare of our community. May profanity never utter its impious voice within these walls. May political corruption never steal through these corridors. May angry words seldom be heard here. And sectional strife be mollified here. May blear-eyed intemperance be ashamed to enter here. May courtesy, and gentlemanliness, and charity, characterize the elders, and modesty and respectfulness the youth, who gather here. May the pleasures that become popular here be such as improve and elevate. Grant that the uses of this town hall may cultivate more and more the civic virtues of our citizens. And may those virtues flourish as the lush grass of our meadows, and the golden fruitage of our hills. May we not forget that righteousness exalteth a nation, that except the Lord build the house they labor in vain that build it, except the Lord keep the city the watchman waketh in vain. And may we all finally attain the right and the fitness for the citizenship above. We ask it all in the Great Redeemer's name. And to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, we will give the praise, now and forever. Amen.

CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS

BY

HON. JOSIAH G. BELLows.

MY FRIENDS AND FELLOW TOWNSMEN:—It is a pleasant duty to bid you all a hearty welcome to your town hall, as it is again re-opened for your use, bright and fresh from the builders' hands. Faithfully and well has the work of its renovation and restoration been done, by the architect, the committee, and the builders, and to-night the old hall receives you with all its ancient and time honored hospitality, and yet so changed and altered, so convenient and spacious, so beautiful in its design that we hardly recognize our old-time friend.

Almost a century ago, no doubt our forefathers gathered under this venerable roof-tree, and with solemn service dedicated it to God and the public weal. And it is most fitting that we, their descendants, many of us their lineal descendants, should renew the pledges they then made and again rededicate this building to its honored uses.

On that far off dedication day, as the speaker, or minister, of the occasion looked through that old window on the fertile valley and fair river winding beneath, he saw, perhaps, a vision rise before him, which he may then have voiced in words, of the future a hundred years would bring, and doubtless he saw in his mind's eye some great city rise here, and in imagination heard the hum of the multitude thronging its busy streets, and the noise of its great factories; but the century has passed and still finds us the quiet agricultural community on which he looked that day, with little of change to mark the passing years. As we were then so are we now, and so we must, as it seems, remain, not among the leaders, but one of the quiet factors of this world, working out,

in our own way, our small share of the mighty problem of human destiny.

Quiet as has been the work Walpole has done in her long life, and humble as has been her sphere, yet she has not been altogether without her influence, nor has this building been without its influence on humanity. This hall has echoed to the words of many a teacher who has done his part toward making men nobler and better, and those lessons have not fallen idly on the minds and hearts of those whom we have sent forth to fight in the battles of the world, for Walpole has done more in what she has given than in what she has kept.

The life of this building has been the life of our nation, its foundation was coeval with our constitution, and it has seen the mighty advance of the Republic from its feeble beginning through so much of its glorious life, through battle, trial and struggle, to the peace and happiness of to-day. With good workmanship and sound and abundant material did our forefathers build this house, and its frame still stands firm and strong as ever, it remained for us only to deck its mighty timbers anew, to add to the past the comfort, the warmth, and brightness of the present, to produce something in harmony with our needs and our age. It is so with our government of which this hall is a symbol, its mighty and enduring pillars, of self government, and the indissoluble union of self governing independent States, were raised long ago by our fathers, and are our pride and our strength, and it remains for us, if we would be worthy of our ancestral greatness, to carry out their grand ideas, and so shape our additions and alterations with the same harmony to the original frame that has characterized the restoration and renewal of this building, that we may attain for all, that individual liberty and happiness which those wise men of old declared was the sole aim of all government. So shall we be worthy descendants of those who laid the mighty foundation, of a pile the magnitude and grandeur of whose finished proportion they but faintly dreamed of, and which even we cannot imagine.

That wise king, Henry IV., of France, said that his ruler's task would not be done until every peasant had his fowl in the pot of a Sunday; but to-day we feel that our task will not be accomplished until no peasant remains in our broad land, and poverty and vice shall cease their rule, and no man shall want for

bodily bread, or the more precious bread of knowledge. When all men shall begin the battle of life with more equal advantage, and more equal chance. And we know that to do all these things we have only to further build on the strong frame work our forefathers builded for us to fully complete their work.

The memories of the past crowd thick upon us as we meet under this time honored roof, and think of those, long since passed away, who then gathered here to do their share of public work. Let us emulate the examples of patriotism and devotion to the public good they have written for us, and strive to do our part in the years to come as faithfully and well as they did theirs—better we cannot do.

Honoring this dear old town, let us each remember that her every interest is ours, and that in all we do to make her more attractive, we by so much increase the benefits she will confer on us and our descendants.

I congratulate you that you have thus renewed and restored this old town home, and so made it what every home should be, bright, convenient and beautiful. In our long contests over this matter we have had many minds as to what was best and needful, but I am sure we are all of one mind to-night, that our work at last has been well done, that our town hall is no longer something to be apologized for, but something of which we may be proud, and long may it stand, the bright centre of a thriving, prosperous, and happy community.

PRESENTATION OF HALL.

After Mr. C. G. SMITH, in behalf of Smith & Allen, the builders, had presented the completed building to the Committee, with brief but most appropriate remarks, Mr. ALBERT F. NIMS, in behalf of the Building Committee, said :—

MR. CHAIRMAN, GENTLEMEN OF THE BOARD OF SELECT-MEN, AND FELLOW TOWNSMEN :—At your last annual March meeting, you appropriated a sum of money for the repairs of this hall, that has since been supplemented with another, mostly used in heating, furnishing, and lighting the building. The work of your Committee is now practically closed, and it is not the least satisfaction we take on this occasion, it is rather, our highest pleasure, that our efforts in this behalf, a work undertaken with many misgivings, have received at your hands, in so good measure, your approval. As we uncovered these walls, all have remarked, many with surprise, and admiration, the stability and firmness of the structure. If our observation has served us, the frame work of the entire building, including the roof, excepting the cross sills and cross beams, is of the best white oak timber, and very large at that, and I will not here discuss, at length, with the farmers of Walpole, the relative merits, the staying qualities, of first quality white oak lumber as a building material. It would be impossible to duplicate, at the present day, from even your choicest groves, this frame work. Think of pieces of oak twelve by fourteen, and twelve by twelve inches square, twenty-eight feet and upwards long. In a word, we found the work of the early fathers well done.

We remember that the Indians had been driven from this fertile valley. That the war for American Independence had closed, but hardly had the citizens come to enjoy the full benefit resulting from that terrible struggle, hardly had the wild beasts been

expelled from the neighboring wood, ere those sturdy men planned a building for church, and town purposes, which even to-day is manly and generous in its proportions.

We view their work, and we say of it:—What joy and hope; what courage and expectation, was theirs. They looked down the years to the future of their town. No undertaking was without warrant, and they builded no better than they knew. No hope was blasted. No expectation, however high, failed in its fulfillment. From these meadows, and plains, and fertile hillsides, they culled the best, the then primal forests had to give, over primitive and many unmarked roads they carried their product to the top of yonder hill, there skilled hands, and energetic purpose framed and fashioned this building, after many years' service moved to this locality, and since, removed from its foundation by your Committee, it nevertheless stands to-day, firm in its original strength. For nearly a hundred years, in seasons of prosperity, and trial, in peace, and war, in church, and State, these walls have echoed the counsels of your wisest and best men. Venerable names—Bellows, Fessenden, Sparhawk, Allen, Kittredge, Hooper, and the many, many others, less in fame, but equal in virtue and honor, how would you, glad spirits, rejoice, could you behold the dedication of this temple anew, to the sentiments, and principles your lives adorned.

We do not return your old hall, in all its original features; not as Boston has preserved her Fanueil Hall, her old State House, Old South Church and King's Chapel do you possess this building to-day, but there is enough left—enough remains—to remind you, your children, and future generations of the energy, manhood and high purpose of the early settlers of this town. You have the building in its full form and size. The cornice at the roof, a work, even at the present day, high in architectural beauty, is preserved and carried throughout the entire outer building; and here the old central window with its elaborate incasement, familiar to you all as your household gods, or the trappings of your firesides, and with all due deference to modern builders and later efforts, this is doubtless the best exhibit of the joiner's handicraft in the entire building. These sturdy posts standing out from the wall as of yore. All these well familiar objects cannot fail to remind you of your old town hall.

In our contractor we have been fortunate. In all the difficulties, perplexities and surprises incident to the repair of an old building, he has met us in a kindly, and obliging spirit, and, Sir, when you leave Walpole there will remain a monument worthy of your record as a builder.

Gentlemen, Selectmen, receive this trust in your hands, with you, and your successors, we are confident this building in all its appointments, will receive all due and appropriate care.

And now, friends, when in the future fifty, seventy, possibly a hundred years hence, some committee of the citizens of Walpole, perchance some committee for repairs, when they shall re-strip these walls, we are assured they will find, as now, this structure in its frame work intact, not a sill gone to decay, not a beam, a post a brace, or a girder wasted, or impaired, and the gigantic roof above us, then, as now, magnificent in its strength.

Mr. JOHN W. PRENTISS, in behalf of the Selectmen, responded:

MR. CHAIRMAN, GENTLEMEN OF THE COMMITTEE, AND FELLOW CITIZENS:—As your representative, it is my privilege and pleasure to receive, in your behalf, this completed town house, from the hands of the Committee constituted and appointed by you for the purpose which they have so well accomplished. We all remember, Gentlemen, the doubt and uncertainty so decidedly expressed, of constructing from the ancient frame-work, which must be the limit and basis of all your plans, and from the appropriation made, a building that should be satisfactory to the wants and tastes of our citizens. “But confession is good for the soul,” and on the part of those of us who entertained such doubts and fears, may I not say to your Committee, you have solved the difficult problem to our satisfaction. You present to us to-night this commodious, elegant and convenient building, which we gladly and proudly accept, as worthy the respect and admiration of the citizens of our grand old Historic town. You, Gentlemen, did not expect, nor was it expected by those who gave you authority to act, that the plans you might adopt and execute would be in accordance with individual preference, or escape individual criticism, that were impossible. But, to-night, forget-

ting all former differences of opinion, and contemplating the comfort, convenience and elegance, which we cannot fail to appreciate in this building, and in all its parts and appointments. I believe I express the sentiments of the citizens of the whole town when I thank you, Gentlemen, for the fidelity and ability with which you have discharged the duty entrusted to you. And may this building long be cherished and preserved, and from it radiate influences tending to the progress and prosperity of our community, and a growing pride in our history.

POEM.

[An impromptu poem written for the occasion by Rev. Thomas Hill, D. D. Stanzas 8-10 refer to an eloquent and touching sermon preached by the late Father Taylor, in the "Town Meeting House," some forty-five years ago.]

READ BY MR. CURTIS R. CROWELL.

" 'Tis sixty years since!" Thus the wizard wrote,
Whose magic pen entranced the human race.
'Tis sixty years since, faithful history writes,
Since these firm timbers found this resting place.

Ah! could some magic touch call back the sounds
Which, first and last, have made their fibers thrill;
With what a rapt attention we should hear,
What mingled feelings would our bosoms thrill.

Come fancy's microphone, assist our sense;
No old Cremona in a master's hand
Waits more obedient to pour forth its tones,
Than now these timbers wait for thy command.

Hark! first a woodland melody begins,
Of branches rustling in a summer breeze,
While squirrels chatter, and the insects chirp,
And birds are singing in the leafy trees.

And next the woodman with remorseless axe,
Cuts short this harmony of grateful sound;
Before his sturdier blows, the sturdy oaks
Soon yield, and crashing fall upon the ground.

Then what a medley of confusing noise!
Of axe and saw; of mallet, chisel, plane;
Of nails that sink beneath the hammer's blow;
Till in new form the timbers stand again.

Now hearken to the sound of holy psalm;
Of fervent prayer; of argument and plea,

Made in the Master's name, that men in chains
Of sin, should look to Him to set them free.

Richly, among those pleas, re-echoes one
Made when this house to other use was turned.
Hark! What a solemn hush came o'er the throng,
Within their hearts what holy fervor burned.

"Praise ye the Lord," the theme the preacher chose,
Praise Him, by loving man whom He has made.
With wondrous power upon that theme he spoke,
At his own will his hearers' hearts he swayed.

Laughter and tears alternate filled the hall;
With shame and high resolve each bosom swelled.
The coldest, sternest hearts were melted there;
The giddiest mind to close attention held.

Never again such eloquence as that,
The fibers of this oaken frame may thrill,
Nor such a mingled tide of holy thought,
And holy feelings, every bosom fill.

But oft hereafter, as in decades past,
May words of kindness, words of friendly cheer,
Words of wise counsel, words of love and truth,
Be heard within these walls for many a year.

St. Louis, Mo., February 5, 1887.









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